

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 SAB-01 /082 W

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P R 071044Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5553

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS, EG

SUBJECT: ISRAELI ACTIVITY AT YAMIT AND RAFAH JUNCTION AREA

REF: TEL AVIV 0010

1. DURING FEB 2 VISIT TO SITE WHERE PROJECTED REGIONAL CENTER OF YAMTI IS TAKING SHAPE, EMBOFFS OBSERVED THAT EXTERNAL CONSTRUCTION HAS BEEN COMPLETED ON ALL 185 HOUSING UNITS DESIGNED FOR INITIAL OCCUPANCY. WORK HAS ALSO BEGUN ON INTERIOR. FOUNDATION WORK APPEARS TO BE NEARING COMPLETION ON INITIAL PORTION OF INDUSTRIAL/COMMERCIAL COMPLEX, ALTHOUGH NO BUILDING CONSTRUCTION HAS YET BEGUN.

2. EMBOFFS HAD OPPORTUNITY TO CHAT WITH HANDFUL OF AMERICANS WHO EXPECT TO SETTLE IN YAMIT, ONE OF WHOM IS SUB-CONTRACTOR FOR SOME OF CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY WITH REMAINDER INVOLVED IN VARIOUS ASPECTS OF PROJECT. ESTIMATES OF WHEN THEY HOPED TO MOVE IN INCLUDED "IN SIX MONTHS" AND "THIS SUMMER", AND WERE ACCOMPANIED BY EXPRESSIONS OF FRUSTRATION AT THEIR

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INABILITY TO HURRY ISRAELI BUREAUCRATIC PROCEDURES.

3. SETTLERS SAID THEIR GROUP OF ABOUT FIFTY AMERICAN SETTLERS WOULD HAVE AS FIRST RESPONSIBILITIES AFTER MOVING IN OPERATION OF WOODWORK FACTORY AND ESTABLISHMENT OF VEHICLE MAINTENANCE FACILITY FOR USE OF IDF SOUTHERN COMMAND. RUSSIAN SETTLERS, ALSO ABOUT FIFTY IN NUMBER, WOULD FIRST SET UP METAL-WORK FACTORY AND THEN PLANNING TO ESTABLISH COMPUTER-SHARING OPERATION LINKED TO COMPUTERS IN U.S. AND DESIGNED TO FUNCTION DURING THEIR DOWNTIME.

4. JERUSALEM POST FEB 5 CARRIES FRONT-PAGE PICTURE SHOWING GROUP OF STUDENTS AND FACULTY FROM TEACHERS COLLEGE IN TEL AVIV PLANTING ONE THOUSAND SAPLINGS" TO HOLD DOWN THE SHIFTING SANDS AT YAMIT." AREA BEING PLANTEDAPPEARS TO BE JUST INLAND FROM CONSTRUCTION SITE.

5. RE NEW SETTLEMENTSREPORTD TEL AVIV 407, YAMIT SETTLERS CONFIRMED THAT OGDA AND SUKKOT WERE " OVER THERE"(WAVING AWAY FROM COAST) AND THAT THEY BOTH STILL CONSISTED ONLY OF TENT ENCAMPMENTS. CONCERNING POSSIBLE MOVE OF NAHAL SINAI TO NEW SITE EAST OF EL-ARISH, EMBOFFS OBSERVED BULLDOZER LEVELING COASTAL DUNES ABOUT 3-4 KMS EAST OFEL-ARISH BUT WERE UNABLE DISCERN PURPOSE OF ACTIVITY WHICH APPEARED TO HAVE JUST BEGUN.

6. COMMENT: AMERICAN SETTLERS WE SPOKE TO AT YAMIT, WHO MAY OR MAY NOT BE TYPICAL OF REMAINDER OF INITIAL GROUP OF SETTLERS, SEMED MOTIVATED BY ADVENTURE OF CREATING CITY IN SINAI DESERT. THEY EXPRESSED SURPRISE THAT SADAT SHOULD STILL BE TALKING OF RETURN TO 1967 BORDERSWHEN YAMIT WAS ALREADY IN PLACE. ONE SETTLER STATED THAT YAMIT WAS ALREADY NEW" FACT" IN SINAI SITUATION AND THAT HE WAS CONVINCED THAT THIS HAD BEEN GOI INTENTION FROM START. TREE PLANTING, OF COURSE, IS TRADITIONAL SIGN OF PERMANENCY HERE.

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